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THE MISSION OF INTELLECT;

A POEM,

DELIVERED AT METROPOLITAN HALL, NEW-YORK, DEC. 20, 1852

BY AUGUSTINE DUGANNE.

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TO THOSE WHO LABOR

INTELLECTUALLY AND MORALLY

For the Good of Humanity,

THIS POEM IS

LOVINGLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR

WOR 19FEB'36

The Mission of Intellect.

PART FIRST.

THE VISION.

I was a student in the schools of earth —
I was a wrestler in the strife for gain —
Until a Voice, which was not of myself,
Out-led my soul from life. My refluent thought,
Upon the electric wires of wondrous sleep,
Had compassed the immeasurable Past,
And journeyed with the Ages! I had trod
The ice-tesselated temples whose dread shrines
Are the upthrown vitals of extinct volcanoes;
Whose columns are gnarlèd clouds, — whose awful arch
Is the indrawn chest of storms — whose architraves

Are the garnered winds — whose visionless capitals
Are the footstools of that unseen deity
Whom men call Science' —

And my soul had sunk —
Even from those wildering deserts it had sunk,
Sounding a measureless deepness, through the maze
Of whirlpools that engulf the Northern seas,
Down to the interminable caves of Ocean!
I trod the unfathomed waters, — where the forms
Of vasty snakes like islands lie entombed —
I passed the innumerable host of Dead,
Marshaled like armies, where attraction wanes,
And bodies have no weight. I climbed the hills
Of long-forgotten treasures — heaps of gold,
And piles of gorgeous merchandry, that years
And ages have collected, in the marts
Of that dead empire Ocean — whence again
No caravan shall bear them — whence not one
Of all the uncounted fleets that in the ports
Of sunless silence ride in endless lines,
Shall voyage forth — beneath the flag of Mammon.

Cold Science — throned upon her awful snows!
And Mammon — reigning o'er the withered wrecks
Of a dead ocean! — these my soul surveyed,
Like one who lifts the mantle of his fate,
And seeth perdition. — These had been my quest!
Science I wooed — to freeze in her embrace;
And Mammon conquered — to be Mammon's slave.
Too late I learned it, as in agony
My spirit moaned aloud. — "Behold!" I cried —
"The Heritage of Science cannot bless —
The Power of Mammon cannot save mankind!
Tell me, O angel of my dreams! reveal
The glorious talisman which shall redeem
Humanity from its curse!"

Once more the Voice of Truth
Went out before me, as a wind, —
And drew my weeping soul! Night came and went,
And days fled swiftly on the rolling wheels
Of golden suns; and seasons, like swift steeds,
Burdened with wealth, and driven by ancient Time,
Rushed past my sight, and vanished. On, and on —

My soul moved, trembling, through the deeps of space:
Cherubim brushed it with their snowy wings,
And radiant angels of the mercy seat
Breathed Eden's odors, as they earthward passed,
Drying my tears with their celestial smiles.
On, through the deeps of space — a million worlds,
Dazzling in hazy glory, crossed my sight;
Myriads of stars stretched gleaming from my gaze,
And countless suns in bright effulgence burned.

Then fell my soul into a wildering trance
Of mystic silence. Solitude seemed bowed
By the awful weight of an eternal hush:
There was no atmosphere — no pulse, to thrill
With the faintest whisper: — vision was no more,
For light was absent. All was darksome void,
Where matter and its attributes were not —
Where Chaos yet was viewless! —

And there pressed
A thought upon my brain, as if a weight

Of madness were approaching — and I cried.
That this was Death — and that there was no God!

Then answered me the Voice of Truth: "Behold!
Thus is Life dead — thus Godless is the world —
When Intellect bows down at Mammon's feet."

Then suddenly, as with electric flame,
A light fell all around me, and a sound,
As of a thousand pinions, rocked my soul!
The immensity of visible space revealed
Itself before me, — and the stars fled back,
And systems melted into mist — and suns dissolved
In ambient radiance, — until space — all space
Was peopled by my soul alone! —

My vision swept the untenanted universe,
And from the shadows of Infinity
I heard the whisper of the Uncreate,
And bowed my listening spirit. Then arose —
Slowly, and like a phantom shape, from out

The invisible Beyond, a shadowy globe ;—
And my soul knew it was — the Earth !
An atmosphere of congelated tears
Covered her brow as with a hoary frost,
And the deep stirred around her — as with sighs.

Once more the awful accents of that Voice
Shook my hushed heart. " Now may'st thou mark the earth !
And, from the Universe of thy Intellect,
Behold Humanity even as it is !"

Then, with a measureless reach, as if one blind
Should strain for sight, my soul looked trembling down,
And saw where, stretched athwart the boreal snows
An old man, tossed with a tempestuous grief,
Lay writhing — while above, in midway light,
Rose, like a sorrowing god before mine eyes,
The Angel of the Wretched. He was crowned
With thorns that gleamed amid the light like gems ;
His brow was rigid, as with conquered grief,
And his bright eyes glittered with unwept tears !

I trembled as his sorrowing glance met mine,
And my soul bowed like Mary at the tomb,
When the angel talked with her.

And then I knew,
That the old man, wrestling with his mighty grief,
Like Jacob with the Evangel of the Lord,
Was the great mass of crushed Humanity —
The bound Prometheus of a suffering world —
Chained to the earth with shackles, which the kings
And great ones of all time have forged from swords
And spears, in the dread furnace of red War —
Whose fires are fanned by mortals' dying breaths,
And fed by slavery's hecatombs of lives!

Then, like the waters of the deep, updrawn
By the pale moon, my tears gushed thickly forth
Beneath the angel's glance, and, stretching out
Mine arms, the while my bosom heaved and tossed
Like a stirred sea, — I lifted up my voice,
As Samuel 'mid the Holies: "Lord! here am I -
Speak: for thy servant heareth!"

And that Voice
Which had out-led me from the world, and showed
The desert throne of Science, and the dead,
Unsentient realm of Mammon, — now spake low,
In a strange whisper, as if all the waves
Of space were breathing lips ; and the wide sound,
Circling infinitude with a subtile reach,
Thrilled through my swaying soul — " Arise, and work —
While the day lasteth — for, behold ! the Night
Cometh, when no man worketh."

Lo ! that Voice
Troubled the waters of mine unbelief,
And healed mine ignorance ! — " Behold !" I cried —
" Behold Humanity is crushed to earth —
Mankind is cursed through toil." Then answered me
A sound, as of the tread of marching orbs,
Rending the heavens ! — and it said, once more,
" Arise, and work !" I trembled, and obeyed.
Even from those infinite heights I sank to Earth,
And stood beside Humanity !

APOSTROPHE

I.

O, EARTH! O beautiful and wondrous earth!
Jewelled with souls, and warm with generous hearts!
The morning stars sang gladly at thy birth;
And all God's sons, through Heaven's unmeasured girth,
Shouted with joy! Lo! when thy life departs,
All things created shall surcease, and thou, —
Girt with great Nature's wrecks — shalt proudly bow,
And with the crumbling Universe bedeck thy dying brow

II.

O bounteous Earth! Thy fresh and teeming breast
Hath nourishment for all the tribes of men!
God is still with thee, and thy womb is blest!
Still with abundant good thou travailest!
And thy dead Ages fructify again,
With a new increase! Yet, O Earth! behold —
Millions are perishing, with pangs untold!
Lo! thy poor children faint, O Earth, for bread reluctant doled!

III.

Mysterious Earth! Thou hast within thy deeps
The boundless stores of science! The immense
Arcanum of all glorious knowledge sleeps
Within thine arms, e keeps
Watch o'er the ipotence!
O mother Earth en plains
Made fields o n veins
Wrought for unholy forged to galling chains!

PIL E.

I.

Thus communed I, as in the lonely night
I wandered from the city's sights and sounds —
Where life's exuberant mirth, in endless rounds,
Was racing with the hours — where false delight,
And hollow joy, and folly without bounds,
And reckless riot which the soul astounds,
Were but the usual objects of my sight,
And grown so thick with life as seldom to affright.

II.

I left behind the crowded thoroughfares,
Where streams of laughing folly dashed along!
I passed the theatres, where sin and song
Were mingled — turned me from the brilliant squares —
And reached the darksome avenues, among
The bleak abodes of poverty and wrong;
Where wretched outcasts crouch within their lairs,
And God's fair workmanship a demon's impress bears!

III.

And, as with hurried feet I nearer drew
To narrow streets, where Wo and Shame and Want
Were task-masters, and Hunger, grim and gaunt,
Wolf-like clutched human throats, and overthrew
The souls of men, — there came, in garment scant,
A woman to my side, whose gait, aslant,
Brought piteously her grievous sin to view —
That most unhappy sin which all the good must rue!

IV.

With tangled hair, and bloodshot, stormy eyes,
And hands clutched nervously across her breast,

As to her heart some treasure she had prest —
With swinging motion, and strange, gasping cries,
As if of some lost thing she was in quest —
Like a wild bird, when foes have robbed its nest —
This woman came to me, and with low sighs
Sank prostrate at my feet, and gasped like one who dies.

V.

And over her I bent, and raised her brow
To the moonlight which fell o'er us, and beheld
How all its blood was from her face dispelled;
And how the furrows deep which sorrows plough,
Were graven on cheek and brow in many a weld;
But Grief, and not Intemperance, had quelled
Her hapless brain, and she, in truth, was now
A maniac woman, doomed to gibber and to mow.

VI.

And this poor being fixed on me the glare
Of her glassed eyes, while on her lips the froth
Of a wild spasm gathered — and, as loth
Even in her madness stranger looks to bear,
Struggled within my grasp, and waxing wroth,

Rent with her nervous hand the tattered cloth
That hid, but shielded not her breast, and there —
Slumbering in peace, I saw — an infant wondrous fair!

VII.

There is nought holier than an infant's sleep!
For the sanctification of its innocence
Enshrines its soul — a shelter and defence;
Like a crystal sea, unfathomably deep,
That guards some blessed island, and prevents
The unhallowed entrance of all earthly sense:
Or like the viewless cherubim that keep
Watch over Eden's gates, lest sin within should creep.

VIII.

And cherubim there are — though visionless —
That fold the infant with their heavenly wings,
And soothe its slumber with soft whisperings
Of the eternal Love and Holiness
Of God! — O, radiant, beautiful things
Glimpses of glory! bright imaginings
Of Eden! must those be, which oft impress
An infant's lips with smiles whose meaning none may guess.

IX.

And this fair Child, which now in slumber lay
Upon its mother's bosom, like a rose
That on a lightning-blasted cedar grows;
This child — which seemed a seraphic Estray
From Heaven — woke not from its soft repose,
Though its frame shook with the convulsing throes
That rent the mother, as, with maniac sway,
She struggled to her feet, and flung my grasp away.

X.

Like an angel slept the infant, while below
Its roseate cheek throbbed that wild woman's heart,
As from its seat it would in madness start;
Even as fair Innocence on the breast of Wo
Calmly reclines, with life and soul apart
From all the raging thoughts that fiercely dart
Their arrowy flames beneath it, to and fro! —
The child slept on, nor guilt, nor madness could it know

XI.

But a whisper in my heart, that seemed to plead
For the mad woman's babe, forbade my feet
To turn, till, haply, I might soothe the heat

Of its wild mother's passion, and outlead
The frenzy from her mind, that throbbed and beat
Like smothered flame, within the burning seat
Of her poor brain ; — for madness, like a reed,
May be swayed as ye will — if ye its humors heed.

XII.

So I no longer wrestled with the rage
That swelled her heart — but fixed on her my gaze;
Like one who tenderly some grief surveys,
Which he with gentle act would fain assuage ;
And as she marked, with wonder scarce concealed,
The unusual pity which my looks revealed —
Pity that words in vain might strive to speak —
I bent once more my head — and kissed her baby's cheek

XIII.

Behold ! at once that darksome street grew bright
With golden beams, whose lustre pure and mild
Fell o'er the mother's form, and wrapped the child !
I turned — and, clad in robes of clustering light,
Dazzling as those in heavenly courts that beam,
I saw the radiant Angel of my Dream ·

And heard the Voice — but now with sweeter sound —
"O Intellect! thou hast thy Mission found!

ORDINATION.

"Go forth, and find amid the world thy field:
And such as these shall teach thee how to live!
Go forth, and mark the sorrows of thy race,
And soothe the madness of their ignorance!
Go forth, and preach that earth is cursed by toil,
Because that toil is linked with want and wo!
Be this thy mission — to exalt the doom,
By patient virtue and by watchful love!
Be thine to teach that man is kin to man! —
That stars may glimmer through the darkest night,
And flowerets bloom amid the rankest weeds;
That in God's plan there is no evil thing
Which may not yet take hold on purity!"

Silent the Voice: but I, with quivering lips,
Implored the Angel's name. — Then answered me

Those flutelike tones, o'erswaying all my heart,
And said, "Behold — I am thy Comforter!
By me the rocky fountains of hard hearts
Are touched, as with the prophet's wand, and gush
In holiest streams; by me the stone of grief
Is rolled from off the mourner's sepulchre,
And CHRIST ariseth 'mid its gloom; by me
Are souls made free from error's leprosy,
As NAAMAN in Jordan; at my touch
The bolts and shackles of misfortune's prison
Fall, as fell PETER'S, when the angel came!
I am the Calmer of life's raging waves!
To me men cry, when sinking — Help! we perish!
Blessèd are they who have my power confessed —
And they who love me — they are truly blest!"

Thy name! I cried — as bent my trembling knee —
Thy NAME! The Angel answered, "CHARITY!"

The vision passed — but I remained enwrapt,
Like him of Tarsus, when the awful light
Shone round about him. But my soul had learned

Its mission among mankind, and it burned
To speak the exalted truth to kindred mind —
That INTELLECT is steward for mankind —
That mental life is more than mental dreaming,
That earth is still no sham — and heaven no seeming —
That untaught souls will find an untrue God:
For ignorance will worship still its clod!
That sacred fire may flame on various shrines:
For LOVE is bound by no sectarian lines!

PART SECOND.

EXORDIUM.

I.

Men of mind! O, men of mind!
Ye who wield the mighty Pen,
Scanning souls with angel-ken! —
Ye who mould our human-kind
In the matrix of your thought, —
Why have ye for ages wrought
Moral miracle and wonder,
Still asunder—still asunder?

II.

Men of mind! O, men of mind!
Could the electric fire of Soul
Fuse ye in one glowing whole, —
Could the immortal flame, enshrined
In each stranger heart and brain,
Flash from one tremendous fane, —
Then might all the world awaken —
Then might Earth with joy be shaken!

III.

Men of mind! O, men of mind!
Ye are stewards of your lord —
Ye are treasurers of his word!
Whatsoe'er on earth ye bind,
Lo! it shall be bound in heaven!
What by you on earth is riven,
Shall in heaven be loosed and broken —
Lo! the Eternal Voice hath spoken!

IV.

Men of mind! O, men of mind!
Flash your million souls in one —
Let the stars become the sun!
Be ye as your God designed!
Then shall Error withering fall —
Then shall perish Wrong and Thrall!
Then shall Freedom's Anthem rise —
Earth's eternal Sacrifice!

INVOCATION.

I.

Hearts of love and souls of daring, in the world's high field of action —
Ye who cherish God's commandments, bending not to rank or faction:
Ye whose lives in slothful pleasure never sink nor idly stagnate,
Ye who wield the scales of Justice, weighing peasant-man with magnate, —
Lo! the Voice of Benediction falls upon you from on High:
Ye are chosen — ye are missioned — ye are watched by Heaven's Eye!

II.

Ye have voices, thoughts and feelings — they were given by God to bless you:
Pour them forth, till Wrong shall hear you — till it fear you, and redress you!
Ye have friends in all God's servants — friends in Heaven, with power supernal —

Friends in all who worship justice, all who fear the great
ETERNAL:
Raise your voices from the Forum — challenge Wrong upon
its throne —
Let your avalanchine warnings sweep the earth from zone
to zone!

III.

Speak ye boldly! pause not — fear not! God is reigning
still above you:
Pour the truth, like light, o'er mankind, if they hate or if
they love you!
Like the Swiss, like Arnold Winkelried — his valorous
watchword crying —
Ye may "make a path for liberty!" — though in it ye lie
dying!
Like brave Decius, white-robed warrior — priest and vic-
tim — ride ye on:
Matters it not if ye shall perish, so the glorious Cause be
won!

IV.

Though ye bleed as John the Baptist — though ye suffer as
Saint Stephen —
Pause not! fear not! hurl your warnings o'er the earth like
gleaming levin!
Lo! your fall shall raise up witnesses, your death shall
prove your mission,
And your murderers will bedew your dust with tears of sad
contrition:
Cry aloud amid life's desert — 'mid the wilderness of
earth —
And "prepare the way!" like him who first announced the
SAVIOUR'S birth!

V.

Trust in Heaven, though ye be lowly! weak and lowly
were those preachers,
Who, from fishermen of Galilee, became Creation's teachers:
Pause ye not, though musty learning hath not doled its
scanty morsels —
For the flaming tongues of knowledge filled with fire the
twelve apostles!

Truth will shame the crafty schoolmen — fill the hoary
scribes with awe —
Like the youthful CHRIST, expounding at Jerusalem the law!

VI.

INTELLECT hath VOICE forever! Let that Voice be firm,
unquavering —
As the dauntless THREE of Israel, in the furnace still un-
wavering —
Lift your prayers like ancient Daniel — praising God amid
the lions —
Smite the priests of cruel Dagons — crush the shrines of
gilded Dians —
Preach ye now like him of Tarsus — as the hill of Mars he
trod:
Words of virtues long forgotten — tidings of the UNKNOWN
GOD! —

VII.

Speak ye boldly! from your temple-tops, Muezzin-like, give
warning!
Bid your brother's eyes turn sunward — bid him hail the
Future's morning!

Point where Truth hath reared her Kaaba — point the
Mecca of salvation —
Till, like Moslems at the minaret-call, shall sink in prayer
each nation! —
Pause not, shrink not in your mission! — Flash the sunlight
of your thought,
Like the blaze of God's first mandate, that revealed what
he had wrought!

VIII.

Speak to kings, as PAUL to FESTUS — till they own the
truths ye teach them —
Speak to men like CHRIST to LAZARUS — till the breath of
life shall reach them!
Though ye lie in chains, like PETER — angel hands shall
ope your prison:
Though ye die, as died the Prophets — trust ye still your
prayers have risen!
Shrink not — pause not in your Mission! — ye must lead
the Future's van:
For JEHOVAH gives to INTELLECT the Stewardship of MAN!

ASPIRATION.

I am looking from my heart through cloudy skies and
stormy years,
While the dim, uncertain Present vails me in a mist of tears;
And a low, mysterious murmuring my sinking spirit hears:

Like the sad and solemn shivering of the trembling forest
leaves,
When the muttered breath of thunder through the rocking
darkness heaves,
Ere the bolt of fiery levin 'mid the crashing heaven cleaves.

And a mighty Thought, like sultriness, o'ersways me, as a
wing —
Even as blended wings of cherubim, while fearfully I sing,
And most fearfully, like Samuel, to the altar foot I cling;

To the foot of that great darkness, lifting high its awful
head —

While the clouds, in rolling billows, over its bosom widely
spread —
Like the darkness round the Stygian shores — the darkness
of the Dead.

At the foot of this dread altar kneel I now with clasped
hands,
And my bosom smites the Darkness, as a billow beats the
sands —
When the Ocean, all behind it, drives it madly on the
strands.

Thus the Ocean of my longings forces on my surging heart—
Till the Darkness seems to crumble — crumble heavily apart,
And beyond it — as from Chaos — golden paradises start.

Lo! the mountainous THOUGHT falls from me — falls from
off my heaving soul —
As if Earth from Titan Atlas should with silent motion roll:
And, behold! it belts the heavens, in a wondrous, flaming
scroll, —

As if all the hurrying thunderbolts, in viewless fingers held,
Whilst they burned upon the azure, were to mortal language quelled —
Straightway now all human Error from my spirit is dispelled!

And I know that towering Altar is JEHOVAH'S Throne on Earth —
And the billowy clouds around it hide the FUTURE'S mighty birth —
This I read amid the flaming THOUGHT, that spans the heavens' girth.

Lo! that Thought is man's REDEMPTION — man's enfranchisement from wrong —
When the Earth to all God's children shall in brotherhood belong —
And the weak shall rest securely on the bosom of the strong.

Like an endless fire, consumeless, burns that THOUGHT before mine eyes:
And my soul's electric flashes would eternally uprise —
Rise and mingle with the PROPHECY that belts the FUTURE's skies!

UNION BOOK ASSOCIATION.

THE true principle of American book publishing, embodying an idea of the peculiar wants of our reading community, and the proper method of responding to such wants, is suggested in the brief essay with which the undersigned have deemed it fitting to preface their announcement to the public. To carry out to its full extent all that is practical and beneficial in a course such as therein indicated, is the design and intention of the "UNION BOOK ASSOCIATION," which, as its name may intimate, will aim at catering for American readers with spirit and material worthy of our country; providing for the constantly developed literary tastes of the people such books as will be truly valuable, useful, and interesting. We have now in press, and ready for issue, several works prepared especially with reference to our main design, that of aiding in the creation of an American standard of literature, to a few of which we call the attention of the public.

In classifying the works designed to be issued from time to time by the Union Book Association, we may use three comprehensive terms—the USEFUL, the AGREEABLE, and the INDISPENSABLE. The *first* will comprise such books as are fitted to occupy a wide field of practical good, in meeting the real wants of the community in all departments of knowledge. The *second*, employing such material as possesses a charm for refined and cultivated readers, will be composed mainly of classic selections in the walks of poetry and general *belles lettres*, issued in elegant style, and suited to obtain a place in the libraries of educated gentlemen, as well as the boudoir of every lady of taste. For this class, the very gems of literature will be sought, and such only chosen as are intrinsically stamped with the seal of excellence. Under our *third* classification, it is designed to furnish books appropriate to every sphere of life, embodying matter of the highest practical importance to the merchant, manufacturer, artisan, agriculturist, and professional man, in their peculiar position, and their relations to society at large. The utmost care and discrimination will be exercised in the preparation of every work issued from our press.

SUMMER READING.

In our department of the AGREEABLE, we shall issue immediately a series of brochure publications, which may be designated as BOUDOIR BOOKS, as they are just such companions as every lady would desire, wherewith to wile a quiet hour at a watering-place or in a country ramble.

> "'Tis heaven to loll upon a couch," says Gray,
> And read new novels through a rainy day;"

but novels are now pretty nearly discarded for more elevated reading, and the lady or gentleman of elegant leisure now loves to pause over the beautiful imagery and inspired words of genius in the loftier regions of thought. To supply an obvious want in this connection, by the issue of what may be termed "hand-books of belles-lettres," is our design in the preparation of Summer Reading; and we hope to present such little *brochures* as will be welcomed by all readers of taste and discrimination.

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All the publications of the UNION BOOK ASSOCIATION will be issued and sold, by the Company and its local Agents, by Subscription only. This step is the result of long consideration, and is adopted from a conviction that, by the establishment of proper agencies, calculated to command the confidence of the community, our books can be made more accessible to Societies and individuals in all parts of the country, and that we can be thus enabled to give more complete satisfaction to those who desire our publications as *soon as issued*. Our prices will be always uniform in every town or city where an Agency is located; and these will be the lowest rates at which such works as we shall issue can be supplied by any publisher. Subscribers at the most distant points of the country will receive the books immediately on publication, with no increase of price for the distance; a great desideratum to readers, who are often forced to pay much more.

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